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Human Life.

THIRD

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

Platonian Literary Society

OF

M'KENDREE COLLEGE.

BY JEHU BAKER.

"LIFE IS EARNEST."

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N O T E.

The following Address was delivered before the PLATONIAN LITERARY SOCIETY, on its third Anniversary occasion, April 21st, 1852.

At a subsequent meeting of the society the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLVED, That the eloquent address delivered by MR. BAKER, at the last Anniversary, be published.

ADDRESS.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE PLATONIAN SOCIETY:

In the address I shall now deliver, I propose to remark in a very general and discursive way, upon the great matter of HUMAN LIFE. There is no theme that lies nearer my heart, and none from which I could so confidently hope to realize some small fraction of good.

Human happiness depends upon the just harmony of all the powers of our being within itself, and with the various objects of the surrounding Universe. Under three heads may be ranked every good that is possible to us. Looking to the Almighty Father of our being, we discover the duties of religion; the obligations of morality depend upon our relations with our fellow-beings; and a right adaptation of our faculties to the material world, is highly essential to our principal enjoyments.

Here we discover the natural foundation of those great departments of human thought—Theology, Ethics, and Physical Science; and these, amplified in their various magnitude, constitute nearly the sum total of our possible attainment.

Theology will embrace that broad domain of truth which spreads away beyond the limits of time and this world. It elevates the mind to some indistinct conception of the Almighty—it is interested with the concerns of eternity, and deals with the momentous facts of Heaven and Hell.

Ethics is a term that carries with it a more sublunary significance. It ranges over that region of our being which lies within the sphere of our intercommunion in the affairs of the present life: The domestic institution—the thousand relations of business—the legislation of States and the intercourse of nations, are all alike subject to its controlling influence.

Physical Science embraces the entire material fabric of creation, and aims to make it subservient to human uses. We here learn the elemental constitution of the material world, and mount upward through the boundless solitudes of space to that sublime superstructure of worlds which surround us.

Thus we are enveloped in an infinite sea of being—reaching through all time and all space—flowing out of darkness from God, and moving on with sublime grandeur to meet the awards of Eternity.

Our own being is but of yesterday. The busy multitudes of men that now tread the earth, may be compared to the flowers and the green foliage of a summer's landscape. Born of the breath of spring as she advances from the sunny South, they rejoice in their short-lived gayety, until the frost of autumn lays them cold and dead upon the freezing earth. Never again shall they bloom while the sun holds his course in the heavens—but oft as the seasons return, another garnishment as beautiful as they, shall decorate the scene where they flourished. So with the generations of men. Coming forth from the shades of the deep and unseen world, they figure for a little season upon the stage of life, and then embark upon that silent sea of death, where no sound of the boatmen is ever heard, or tidings borne back of the countless millions that have sailed out upon the dark and long voyage.

To any one who will think considerably, such reflections must bring a feeling of solemn seriousness. Looking thus backward and forward over the whole area of our mortal life, we see the diminutive span of our utmost reach, and feel how like we are to the summer insect that dies with the day that gives it birth.

The very place where I now stand—this plain old College building—those trees that wave over these beautiful grounds—those walks and rural cottages, are all alive with associations that can never fade from my heart, and which at the same time are calculated to sustain that earnest impression of life which I am presenting.

Years freighted with disappointment and care have flown by, since with a high beating heart I bade farewell to these College scenes; and now, when I revert again to the days that can never return—and pass in review the dim shades of those glorious hopes that here loomed up in my bosom—and call back from the cold grave the familiar forms of those that I here loved, it seems to me that I am standing rather among the tombs of the dead, than engaged in the work of a literary entertainment.

It is sad to think of the changes that time has wrought—of the proud hopes humbled in the dust—of the hearts that have sunk down in despair upon the journey of life,—it is sad to think of the brilliant promise and the mournful consummation. Yet ev-


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everything that I here see, carries my mind back through the shadows of the past, and rouses some spectre of ruined anticipation. How many that have gone hence, wrapped in visions of glorious success, are now sprawled, lamed and lost in the sloughs of this lower world! How many are becalmed on the sea of life—with no hope to quicken their hearts, and no breeze to bear them on through the solitudes of ennui and despondence! How many have closed their eyes upon these bright heavens, and laid down amid the noisome vapors of the “dark and narrow house!”

I think of one, whose eye was instinct with the fire of genius, whose heart was the throne of honor, and who went forth from these scenes breathing the aspirations of a high and confident ambition. He won the first honors of a celebrated professional school. He sowed the seed, but death reaped the harvest. His humble grave now kisses the sunbeams that warm the green hills of Kentucky.

And I think of another, whose lamb-like gentleness of temper and fine strung intellect made him an object of universal admiration and love among his College associates. In a grove just a little way to the South of this, I heard his valedictory address. It was a beautiful summer's evening, and I can well remember the tears that trickled down the cheeks of his class-mates and preceptors, as he dwelt in terms of moving eloquence upon the sad ravages that time would make in their number. He said that those of them who died first, should yet live in the hearts of their surviving friends, and that as the seasons returned, their lonely graves should be decorated with the choicest floral offerings. I was touched with the sentiment at the time, and it is one which I have always loved to cherish. There is nothing more beautiful in our nature, and hardly anything more divine, than that feeling of devoted and undying love, which follows its object through the shadows of death to the abodes of the spirit world. It shows that our affections are eternal, and points to a re-union of hearts in that land, where no clouds of sorrow shall darken the golden fields of light. There is joy in the communion of hearts that love, and there is grief when such hearts must bid adieu until the morning of the Resurrection. But the fires of hope still burn among the ashes of the dead, and the affections of nature will not suffer them to leave our bosoms. We delight to look again and again upon the little mementoes of their love—to press their pictures to our lips and our hearts—to visit their graves long years after they have died, and



weave festoons of flowers for them in the early spring. But I find I am yielding myself to the direction of a favorite feeling. I was going to say that that young speaker himself was the first that fell by the hand of the destroyer. He sleeps the sleep of death in the old graveyard of Lebanon.—I need offer no apology for this tribute to the memory of those dead who once trod the paths of learning in this same Institution; for I know, that if any of you were assured of a like untimely end, it would be a pleasant reflection to think that you would not be entirely forgotten by your companions, as soon as the clods of the valley dried over your graves. But it was my design to infer a lesson of humility and earnestness from these melancholy reminiscences of the past. They show how vain are the glory and ambition of human life, and carry with impressive emphasis to our minds that weighty precept of inspired wisdom, “work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.”

And if we enlarge the sphere of our reflections, and take in the whole range of our observation and experience through life, we shall find an additional confirmation of the emptiness of human pride, and of the evanescent glare of this world’s choicest hopes. How like the tomb-stones that whiten the distant hills in some lonely solitude of nature, are the memories of those bright and happy days, when heaven and earth, and all things beneath the circle of the sun, glowed with the effulgence of truth and love and purity! And how like the shades of night that rest upon the confines of the infernal world, are those clouds of grief—dark, portentous, wild and deep—that gather round the heart as this scene of fantasy disappears! There is a period in the spring-time of life when this world is fair and beautiful as the garden of Paradise before the breath of hell blasted its flowers. The young human heart bears within itself a creative power—bringing light out of darkness, and clothing the arid wastes of Real Life with the groves and birds of gorgeous plumage, the enchanted springs and sweet-smelling spices which Oriental imagination referred to the region of Happy Arabia. But such creations cannot endure. They fade like flowers in a solitary place, and their withered leaves are scattered by the winds of the desert.

—“Tears, idle tears—I know not what they mean,  
Rise in my heart and gather in my eyes,  
In looking over the happy autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.”



Strange that the Poet knew not the meaning of those tears. They are the sobs of the child that is torn from the bosom of its mother,—they are the wail of the broken-hearted maiden, as she strays “by the silver-light of the moon” and weeps for the ruin of betrayed and abandoned innocence,—they are the sigh of the exiled patriot, who from some lonely coast or isle of the sea, looks over the stormy deep toward that loved and far-off home to which he shall never return,—they are the voice of Nature in the universal human heart—ceaseless as the ocean’s moan—earnest, silent, deep as the fountains of life.

Nor need it be said that this view of our condition is at all exaggerated. “No man can look upon the world and be glad.” Think of the wild waste of the historical ages—of the seas of blood, crime and woe that have deluged this earth to the mountain tops;—think of the monster vices that are laying waste the harvest of life and “putting rout among the nations”—of those starving garrets and chilling cellars—those underground-hells and maelstroms of death and sin;—think of those thousands of wretched men—with cadaverous visages and stooped shoulders—breath noisome as the vapors of the tomb—straw hats and linen pants in the dead of winter—swaggering, reeling, tottering down to a despised and neglected grave, where no stone shall mark the spot, and no kind remembering tear of love shall ever be shed;—think of those thousands of lovely women, snared in the gins of temptation, and sent forth to wander among the bleak hills of mockery and scorn—with the curse of the world upon their hearts, and no relief but to cry to the bending heavens for that sympathy which is so dear to the human bosom;—think of those troops of gilded villains—dazzling as the basilisk—deadly as the upas-tree—loathesome as the infernal sorceress of Milton—dark, deep, foul and damnable beyond all power of conception—with hearts set on fire of hell—shedding pestilence in their track, and blasting every flower of innocence within the range of their destroying visitations;—think of that stertorous groan that ascends from the great deep of the world’s heart—of those tears of grief that can never be assuaged—of those burning winds of remorse—sweeping over the troubled bosom of guilt—scorching every green place and drying up the warm blood of life. The man who will look upon such scenes with the complacent smile of indifference is deficient in heart—and he that exults in the sad destinction of the “laughing philosopher” is hardly a more reasonable being than the wretch who can mock the mur-



dered dead, or dance in bacchanalian riot over a mother's grave. "But as yet struggles the twelfth hour of the night. Birds of darkness are on the wing. Spectres uproar. The living dream. The dead walk. Thou, Eternal Providence, wilt make the day dawn!"

But I need not resort to the arts of description in order to sustain the view that I am maintaining. We have the authority of Jesus Christ and the Apostles—of the Prophets of Israel—of the Sages and Heroes of Virtue in all ages of the world. They have all represented man as reaching to heaven by some attributes of his nature, and sinking to the shades of perdition by others,—and they have represented human life as a dismal scene of conflict between these opposing elements of the human heart. They have represented our world as a grand theatre of disputed possession—as a wild province redeemed from chaos—lying far remote from either extreme, where day mingles with night, and the Truth of God contends with "the power of the Spirit of the air." And they have nobly lived and died in the service of that Truth. Poor in the goods of this world—despised, scorned, and rejected—driven to the wilderness and desert—the racks and dens and caves of the whole earth can testify of them. Yet they departed not from the work which God had put in their hearts,—but with night-long vigils—with fasting, prayer, and mighty yearnings of spirit, they have kept alive some sparks of that Promethean fire, without which this world would be dark as the dungeons of the dead.—That Seer of Patmos—that John with his raiment of Camel's hair—that Socrates in the market place of Athens—that Epictetus with his iron lamp—those saints and martyrs of the early Church—those heroic defenders of the Truth in every age and country of the world—*these* are they who have made the earth wholesome with their toil and blood—and these are they who should attend the souls of living men!

Where are the gormand idols of our poor sad world when brought into company like this? Where are those bloody conquerors that the school boy is first taught to swell at the thought of? Where are those merchant princes, covered all over with the tinsel of the worm, and carrying whole armies of todies in their train? Where are those grovelling poets and novel mongers—so loved and mighty in this great century of progress—Byron, Sue, Bulwer, Paul de Kock and a host of fouler name, fishing in the purlieus of death and sin for the current staple of popular



consumption? Where are those leaden-hearted philosophers—Hobbs, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire and such—perched like owls in darkness and holding discourse of day? Where are your singing Jennys, and dancing Elslers and model Artists—than whom there is no greater God among all the dark minded worshippers of Flunkydome? Where are your swarms of crack stump orators, bellying out their vapid balderdash of speech—your mustachioed libertine patriots, swaggering in all saloons, cursing the highest Truth, and swearing on the altar of liberty? Where are your party editors and brawling politicians—harnessed like beasts of the field and dancing like puppets at the bidding of a master? Where are your renowned and overshadowing statesmen, sowing for their harvest in the sloughs of human depravity—grinding like Sampson in the mill of the Philistines, and blind as he? Where is your gilt and powdered hypocrisy—roosting upon its velvet cushioned pews among the great black walls of those mighty cities? Where are your inexorable money grubbers—true to the instincts of a swinish greed, and getting the heart's worship of those gaping bipeds calling themselves men?—none the less as God lives, tho' remorseless avarice coin its gains from the blood and tears of palefaced consumed women, quartered in squalid sheds and making shirts at five cents a piece.—Where are your gloating demons of lust—todied in polite circles, and leering with fiendish eye upon the garden of beauty? Where is that hellish moloch of public opinion, venting fire upon the poor, trembling, friendless *victim*, and showering choicest honors on the *victimizer*? Where are *all* those thousands humbugs and atrocious damning heresies, absorbing the heart of the world, and choking out the light of Heaven? See them, as they lord it over the entire earth, darkening the sun with the filthiness of their abominations! See them, and know that their ultimate value under heaven is this—that they are mere vulture's meat—floating masses of putridity upon the bosom of the world—to be devoured at last by the avenging fires of wrath. Yea, sure as there is a God of Power and Justice in the universe, every foul and false and wicked thing, tho' lifted to the very heavens, and filling the heavens with its greatness, and cheered by the millions of all centuries—shall come down from its proud height in the fulness of time, and sink to that bottom where it shall never again curse the light of day!

But as yet it is “neither sea nor good dry land,” and ages unnumbered shall pass away before that resplendent Order, radiant with



the beauty of God, shall arise out of the fiercely combatting elements and storms of whirlwind that now shake the foundations of the world. The warrior will not repose upon his laurels until the victory is won ;—and now that the evil days have not finished their course, and the dragons of iniquity are abroad in the earth, crushing out the eternal happiness of men, it is the part of an immortal soul to rise in stern war against those infernal destroyers, and *never* to bow down before them, tho' mocked and cursed, and burnt to ashes in the fires of the contest. Protean-shaped, voracious as death, terrible as the beast of the vision, wearing ten thousand seducing forms, with deep lodgment in nearly *all* hearts, they are to be met in every high place and low place, and nook and corner and hole of the world,—and wherever met, they are found gnawing at the vitals of life, or sitting with vampire weight upon the struggling souls of men. Arm ! arm for that high encounter which places all others in shaded insignificance—with a brave heart and the good sword of eternal truth—attended by that seven thousand who have never bowed their knees to Baal, and by the shades of those immortal dead who have fought well the battle of life—strike, and stand, and strike until you have victory or death !

O ! is it the hallucination of a distempered fancy ? the morbid dream of fevered sensibility ?—Nay, by the light of heaven and the glorious ages above, it is that the men of this world have groped in black night until darkness has become their element. That wide expanse of spiritualism—that boundless sea of happiness which is possible to the human soul—those lofty and enrapturing forms of beauty, floating with angelic loveliness thro' our minds when we feel the spirit of the stars in our bosoms—that mournful grandeur of life and death, coming to us from the sighing woods and silent fields—those long periods of eternal duration, where floods of joy gild the smiling hills of immortality—reflect from the great *heights* of our being, a light that flares over the lorn wilds of this deep sunken world ! Yea, the very heavens do testify, and nature speaks through all her murmuring seas and forests. From the other side of that gulph where other spheres sound the march of time and other suns blaze in their central orbs—from all the tongues of inspired and mighty men of virtue in all time—from the raging fires of anguish that burn and ever burn in our own hearts—there comes a voice, proclaiming in terms not to be mistaken, that the



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mildew of death and hell has settled upon our globe, and that human life in this world in one of terrific earnestness !

But I could never reach the just altitude of my argument without reference to that sublime Teacher whose spirit is abroad upon the troubled waters of human life. Without treading upon the confines of exact Divinity, there is a lower and critical view which must meet with universal approbation. It is that Jesus of Nazareth is the colossal figure of all history, looming up like a mountain of light between the dark centuries of Paganism which had gone before, and the ages of strife, sin and suffering which followed after and are yet to come. No historical fact that carries an importance so immense, as the life of that young Being, who from the rocky shores of Palestine, and in a remote and dark age of the world, has sent forth an influence that still widens after the lapse of eighteen centuries—breathing the fire of heaven into the cold and gloomy chambers of the human heart. Pure as the Spirit of God, and reaching up to the empyrean of the gods, he has opened the portals of that bright and shining world, that men may look aloft and see the glory of the life eternal. With heart more tender than woman's, he wept over the sad ruin of our race, and far different from the unfeeling cruelty of men, he said to the poor heart-broken penitent, trailing in the dust of humiliation and shame, "go and sin no more." O ! what a sublime example of every Virtue ! and how grateful does the heart feel, when borne down with sorrow under the wrongs that are eating up the earth, and after it has gone in vain to the wise men of every age—how grateful does the heart feel, when it finds there is not one vice that is not condemned. and not one virtue that is not exalted, by that Jesus of Nazareth—that lone and peerless One ! What fire of heaven in that law of the Sexes, by him first published under the sun—what heights and depths of spiritual truth in that law—laying the injunction of Purity alike upon *both* sexes,—and without which this vast human heart would be foul as the sea of Sodom and Gomorrah. But the men of this world, despising the voice of their own hearts, and setting their faces against heaven, have laid the whole weight of the law upon the shoulders of Woman ;—and that sin of Incontinence, which has peopled the grave with more victims than any other, and worked a more horrid depth of ruin and depravity, passes the ordeal of Public opinion unscathed, and wins from creeping things boasting the name of philosophy

the kindly epithet of “*amiable foible* \*” — even while putrid death, staring from its leaden sockets, answers back—“it is a Lie!” And so of *all* the evil that festers in the world’s heart. Faintly seen, if seen at all by the dim light of philosophical wisdom, it lies sprawling in all its huge deformity, when dragged into open day by that mightiest Teacher. And thus he stands, speaking over the dark waste of human life, clothing that life with Eternal significance, invoking the Authority of Heaven, and speaking with a voice that will reach the last age of the world. Such in a historical view is that son of Joseph the carpenter.

Here then is the great Ideal, the living reality, and more than that, of the soul’s highest conceptions of Virtue and Wisdom—in all the wide sea of time the only one. He therefore is the last hope of humanity,—for the heart will not be virtuous without carrying in its own recesses a noble ideal of virtue; and here is the outward Exemplar of that ideal, rising like a pillar of light to the heavens—fair and beautiful in all its proportions. Nor should it be said that I am invading the province of Divinity in a secular lecture. It would be as absurd to discourse upon the great generalities of human life without notice of Jesus Christ, as it would be to undertake a history of natural science and astronomy without reference to the discoveries of Cuvier or Newton. The spirit of that Teacher is upon the world; it is blended with all the heights and depths of the human heart, and you can no more regard the one without the other, than you can remove the law of gravitation from the earth, or separate the grand movements of the universe from the sustaining power of God.

But the point I am gaining, is the authority of that wonderful Teacher; his authority as a rule of opinion and life; sustained as it is, by every authority worthy of the name in the Universe. He has brought in to our world a torch that shines over the wide ocean of Eternity, and illuminates the whole of that immense void between the throne of God and the lowest deep of the infernal waste. And by that great light, and through that vast medium, we are enabled to gather an impression of the overwhelming importance and earnestness of human life. We feel the spirit of Immensity upon our hearts, and rise above that cumbrous load of lies, sins, and fleeting follies that would weigh us down to the earth. We read the sig-

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\* Gibbon, in various parts of his history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, remarks to this effect.



nificence of vice in the mutilation of its victims around us, and see it gather fresh horrors when reflected back from its native seats of darkness. We feel an obligation to advance forward to the line of Duty—assured that, if we halt, stagger or retreat from the ranks, we shall have the weight of the Universe upon our shoulders at last.

This great light, young gentlemen, rising far above the base level of current opinion and sentiment, it should be the labor of your lives to reach and maintain; and unless you reach it, your ideas of human life will be as worthless as the speculations of a mole upon the geography of the earth. When you shall go hence into the world, the only hope of your value depends upon your carrying with you that noble grandeur of thought and feeling, that deep and earnest devotion to virtue, which will enable you to stand up, though solitary and alone, and breast the waves of falsehood and corruption that are sweeping over the earth in proud and defiant strength. As scholars, you will see how incompatible with this moving earnestness, are all the airs and complacent conceits of pedantry. Let not your language be of Latium and Ilion, of Helicon and Parnassus; stop not to sport with the muses in the groves of Arcadia, or to weave garlands of taste in the schools of heathen philosophy; but rather, with the fire of the New Revelation in your hearts, with an awful sense of your position in the Universe, with the eternal ages before you and behind you, with heaven over your heads and hell beneath your feet, go out among the millions that lie weltering in the stygian seas of life, and speak with a speech that will not shame the high and terrible import of the scene. Call with a voice that will reach the ears of the dead, and break the nightmare of the sleeper! Oh, there is no time for piping the songs of peace when the blasts of war are howling in the heavens! There is no time for the timbrel and harp, no time for repose in the bowers of ease, when the rage and fury of battle thicken over the face of the world!—None the less a battle, O God! none the less a battle, because every land under heaven is the scene of the conflict; because the artillery of hell and the swift-winged legions of darkness dispute the field; because those who are cloven down in the strife, leave not their blood to fatten the soil, nor their bodies to feed the fowls of the air! There is a death that sinks deeper than the grave; and there is a murder that is more dreadful than the carnage of a thousand fields. It is the death which puts out every light of the immortal soul! It is

the murder which turns the heavens into iron, and the heart into ashes ! I have seen the ravages of that death and that murder ; and O ! by all that is terrible in the wild and throbbing depths of human woe, I have marvelled at the maniac laugh and stolid indifference with which men have regarded them. And the agencies producing that ruin are in the full tide of vigorous action. Like flax before the flames of a devouring fire, the virtue and happiness of our race are being swept down beneath that all-deluging flood of iniquity, which, for some inscrutable reason, has been permitted to escape from the prison doors of darkness and death. And in view of this tremendous fact, as compared with the frivolous shallowness of the great mass of mankind, and their stupid insensibility to right and wrong, we are forced to the melancholy conclusion, that they are hardly such at all, but rather a description of apes, not knowing what manner of world they inhabit.

Fortified with these great thoughts and deep feelings, you will carry an atmosphere of spiritual sublimity round your hearts, which will constitute you a foreign element in the world. For you will feel in all your being, a necessity to divide between the eternal True and the eternal False, and to rest your soul's destiny upon the former ; knowing that the minority in which you shall stand, deplorable as it may be, is yet the seven thousand of every age ; and always content with the reflection, that, however matters may go for the present, you will be sustained by the power of Almighty God in the end.

You will find that the pleasures and honors you now anticipate so confidently, will turn out like the forbidden joys in the myth of Tantalus ; and you will find that that beautiful ideal of purity which you now carry in your bosoms, can never meet with its realization among the fogs and moorlands of this dark rolling earth. But you will see, nevertheless, that it has the noblest of uses, for it is a glowing emblem of the higher life, holy and spiritual in the happy fields of eternal day. It is a monitor from God, ever speaking in your hearts, and telling you the end for which you were made. But according to the current and approved wisdom of the times, it is a deadly heresy to listen to that sublime and seraphic voice, and public opinion, huge, ill-shapen monster, thunders against it with her thousand tongues. You will hear the doctrine of conformity to the world proclaimed in every rank of society ; and you will see it bolstered into a towering popularity, by such as are as ready with a kiss for the feet of baseness, as they are with a sneer



of contempt for the noblest truths of God. Yet if you would not sink pernicious depths below the moral level you now occupy, abandon not the ideal of your hearts; nor humble yourselves before the lies and sorceries that have grown great by the blind adulation of mankind. Your personal dignity, your eternal happiness, your allegiance to the Maker of your souls, forbid the idolatry! And these are weightier considerations than the authority of a thousand myriads of rooting things, and the shells to be gained by rooting.

Yes, if you would not wholly abandon the idea of being any account at all, you must divide from the great mass of the world, as oil divides from water. You must realize that the work which God has put upon you, is simply the *attainment and practice of virtue*, and not the pursuit of ambitious and selfish objects, such as fame, wealth and power. And you must have a standard of Truth, which will serve as a criterion of judgment for all disputed issues—and that standard must be Jesus Christ and the Nature of Things;—not the voice of the world in God's name, though it speak with authority and in tones of thunder;—not the ocean of books that have come down to us in the great drag-net of time—confused and vast medley of crudities and opinions, mixed up in the mire of falsehood and vice;—not the authority of that cloud of modern critics, who have darkened the face of literature, morality and religion with heathen fulminations in a Christian age;—not the authority of the Church, as we now see it in the earth, covered over and festering to its heart's core with corruptions as it is; not either or all of these together—but simply Jesus Christ and the Nature of Things.

And when you have risen to an ample conception of this world, with its immense and real significance, as compared with the small and miserable notions that prevail, you will be fortified with an earnestness that will lift you above the babbling of censure, and urge you on in the service of Truth, however despised and insulted. And your hearts will glow with that honest love for all your fellow beings, which will make it impossible for you to look with indifference upon anything that invades their rights, or tends to degrade their character and injure their happiness. This all-boasted civilization of the day, you will see struggling beneath the incubus of an overshadowing materialism, praised and defended by a philosophy that finds the highest realization of human greatness in railroads, ocean steamers, lightning telegraphs, and cotton gins. You will stop, therefore, and consider awhile before you

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raise your voices in bombastie adulation to' the "age of progress." You will see luxury, foul corrupter of every virtue, growing upon our country; and you will find dwarf heads and dwarf hearts, made for ignoble uses only, scattered thick as the frogs of Egypt. You will see our great Eastern cities sitting like huge baboons on the Atlantic coast aping the follies of Europe; and you will see the intermediate populations dancing in chorus to the banks of the Mississippi. You will see puny-visaged and brainless aristocracy curling its nose at that Atlas of civilization—him with the hard hand and sunburnt face, carrying on his shoulders the whole weight and superstructure of civil society, and without whom the world would go back to savageism at once. You will see your poor sister woman, delicate and tender as she is, made to bear the sins of the whole world.

These and multitudes of like absurdities and vices, you will find lording it triumphantly in every quarter. But yet you must stand up against them—by the eternal value of your manhood, by your love of heaven, and your fear of hell, you must stand up against them!

Every thing we see around us is passing away. Even the so called eternal outlines of nature bear the impress of mutation and decay. Yet a little while, and you will lie down in the silence of death; and then the wild grass shall grow, and the snows of winter shall whiten, and the loud winds of heaven shall beat over your forgotten graves. Virtue alone has treasure that will outlive the wreck of this temporal world. Oh then let that be one absorbing motive of your hearts! A motive that will not perish like the fleeting hour as it passes, but stand, and be sanctified by an approving conscience, when this earth and these heavens shall fly away before the face of God.

